

The

SABBATH SCHOOL

...MISSIONARY...



Volume 64

Stanberry, Missouri September 5, 1949

Number 35

The Ninety and Nine

(A First Century Story)

By H. E. Thmpson, D. D.

One day when Jesus was about eighteen years of age, he heard his father and mother talking about a relative who lived some distance from their home in Nazareth. He was a shepherd and owned a large flock of sheep. He had been taken suddenly ill and needed someone to help him.

It was the time of year when the harvests were ripening, and all the hired men would be needed in the harvest fields. For that reason Uncle Abram, as he was called, had sent to his friend, Joseph the carpenter, to ask if he could spare one of his workmen for a few days to care for the sheep during the time of his illness.

In listening to the conversation, Jesus learned that all his father's workmen were engaged upon work which had been promised at a certain time, so that not one of them could be spared. While they were sorry to know of the illness of Uncle Abram, yet they could not spare a single hand at this time.

As Joseph was about to send word back, bearing this information, Jesus said to his father: "Why can't I go over and help Uncle Abram?"

"No," answered Joseph, "your presence from the synagogue school even for a short time would spoil your record of attendance, and neither your mother nor I wish that to occur."

"But, Father," replied Jesus, "our teacher is ill, and the school is to be closed until after the next Sabbath. I came in to tell you about it, when I heard you and Mother talking about the need for someone to help Uncle Abram out for a few days; so, you see, I would not have to miss any of the classes."

"Well," answered Joseph, "that puts the matter in a new light; and, if your mother is willing, you can go over and do what you can."

As Mary had heard that there were no wild beasts in the woods surrounding the pasture where the flock was kept, she gave her consent. The next morning at sunrise, Jesus started for the home of His father's friend.

He learned there that he would have to be with the flock most of the time both day and night, watching the sheep as they fed during the day, and at the same time being constantly on the lookout for a good grassy place for the next day's feeding place. At the close of day it would be His duty to lead the flock from the feeding ground back to the fold, which was located in one corner of the pasture, and see that the sheep were all safely cared for, in this way, for the night.

Near the gate of this enclosure was a covered shelter in which the shepherd could sleep when it grew cold during the night, and also be sheltered in rainy weather. Each evening food enough to last for a full day would be sent to the shepherd from Uncle Abram's home. This arrangement made it possible for the shepherd to be constantly with the flock.

Jesus reached the pasture during the afternoon of the same day He left home; so, when the sun began to approach the western horizon, he led the flock across the pasture and into the enclosure for the night.

After eating His evening meal, Jesus seated Himself just outside the gate to watch the sun, as it slowly dipped toward the horizon. A little later the stars began to appear in the sky overhead. As Jesus watched the stars flashing out, first one by one, and then later in groups, He thought of His most noted ancestor, David, the king of Israel, who, as a boy, had also tended his father's sheep. "He must have watched the same stars that I am watching," thought Jesus, "and looked upon just such scenes as I have seen tonight." Soon Jesus found himself repeating the words of one of the well-known songs of David: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge."

Jesus knew this section by heart and repeated the whole Psalm while reclining on the grass just

(Continued on page two)

The Sabbath School Missionary

Mable J. Baker, Editor Stanberry, Missouri
Owned by the General Conference of the Church of God.

Published weekly (except one issue during the Annual Campmeeting in August and one during Christmas week) at the Church of God Publishing House, Stanberry, Missouri

Subscription Rates: Single copy one year 50 cents; Club of six or more to the same address 35 cents each per year. Foreign subscription rate \$1.00 per year.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Stanberry, Missouri under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Thoughts for You . . .

God has many ways of speaking to us. We see the leaves on the trees and plants and we know God is saying it is harvest time or planting time. We see the sky when it is dark with clouds and we know we are likely to get rain. There are many ways to know that God is sending us a message.

God even speaks to us through what we read. Good books and papers show us the beauty of this world, and God made the world. Fine poems and stories showing how others meet life's problems make God a real part of our lives.

We can choose what we read. But it is important to choose good books and magazines and of course the Holy Bible. What we read usually stays in a corner of our minds and we think about it long after we have read it. When we read trashy, worthless books our minds become cluttered with these things and there is not much room for the fine ideas and thoughts we want to keep there.

Philippians 4:8, says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things."

When our minds are taken up with these good things there is no room for evil to enter.

—M—

THE NINETY AND NINE

outside the gate. For a long time He sat still, enjoying the stillness of the night. Later He wrapped His hair cloth mantle about Him and lay down to rest, just outside the closed gate of the fold.

The next two days passed happily and quickly, as Jesus led the sheep to the east side of the pasture on the first day, while on the second He led the flock as far as the pasture extended to the western edge. In this way he varied their feeding grounds.

On the third night, after the sheep were folded

and Jesus had eaten His evening meal, He was attracted by the peculiar actions of one of the sheep. He noticed that, instead of lying down as usual, she would walk about the enclosure, moving from one group to another, and finally coming to the gate, she would look out through the bars, first in one direction and then in another; after that, she would try to push her head between the bars in her attempts to look out over a larger area.

As Jesus watched her, His first thought was that some small animal, or field rodent, had got inside the fold and, while harmless so far as the sheep were concerned, its presence was disturbing the restless member of His flock. This idea He dismissed when He noted that none of the other sheep were at all restless, but were lying in groups contentedly chewing their cud, preparatory to a good night's rest, a little later.

After patting the head of the restless sheep and feeling of her nose, Jesus came to the conclusion that she was not ill, but in perfect health.

All at once the thought came to Him that she had lost her lamb and had been seeking it among the different groups in the fold; and not finding it had come to the gate to look out through the bars to see if she could discover its whereabouts.

At once Jesus entered the fold and, after counting the sheep in the various groups, He realized that one lamb was actually missing. This explained the strange actions of the restless sheep, but it also revealed to the young shepherd that there would be no sleep for Him until He had discovered the whereabouts of the lost member of His flock.

After tightening the straps of His sandals, and strapping His mantle more tightly about Him, He reached for His staff and started out toward the west end of the pasture where the flock had been feeding during the day.

The filled-out crescent of the new moon gave Him light enough to see about Him for some distance, as He made His way to the extreme edge of the section where He was sure the sheep were pasturing the day before, keeping a sharp lookout at both sides of the path He traveled. Seeing nothing of the lost lamb, He turned northward and began searching among the gullies and ravines and rocky sections of the pasture, uttering from time to time the well known call of the shepherds.

The search was long and difficult, but at last the weary shepherd heard a faint answer to His call. Following the direction of the faint cry, He came to a rocky ravine, filled with wild vines and thorn bushes; and there, entangled in the vines and bushes He found the lost lamb. In its struggles to free itself, it had only succeeded in entangling itself more firmly among the wild shrubbery of the place.

As the light of the moon did not directly illuminate the place, the young shepherd found it some-

thing of a task to free the lamb from its entanglements. For some days both of His hands bore the scars and scratches received in His efforts to extricate the lamb.

The moon was nearing the western horizon when Jesus reached the fold with the lost lamb in His arms; but when He did, He was rewarded by the glad cries of the watching sheep, as she began mothering her lost lamb.

Early in the morning of the sixth day of the week, Uncle Abram appeared at the fold, announcing that he was much better and that his young assistant could return to his home in Nazareth. Jesus reached His own home before the sunset, which marked the beginning of the Sabbath.

While Jesus was relating the story of the lost lamb, He noticed a strange, far-away look in His Mother's eyes, which He could not interpret; but He was glad to be at home again, so as not to miss the synagogue service of the day.

Jesus did not know at that time, in later life, He would make the story of His adventure the basis of one of His best-remembered parables; nor that this parable would be translated into more than a thousand languages and dialects, and that eventually the story would be passed on from one lip to another, until it should reach the ends of the earth.

Nor did Jesus realize at that time that nearly two thousand years later, in a land undreamed of in His day, and situated on the other side of the earth one of His faithful followers, a saintly woman, would retell the story of His gift of kindly service, in a beautiful hymn, which would be sung in every country of the world. Here is the hymn:

THE NINETY AND NINE

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold—
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender shepherd's care.

'Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;
Are they not enough for Thee?'
But the shepherd made answer: 'This of mine
Has wandered away from me.
And though the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep.'

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed
through,
Ere He found the sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert He heard it cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die.

'Lord, whence are those blood drops, all the way,
That mark out the mountain's track?'
'They were shed for one who had gone astray,

By the Shepherd, to bring him back.'
'Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?'
'They were pierced tonight by many a thorn.'

And all through the mountains, thunder-riven
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a glad cry to the gates of heaven,
'Rejoice, I have found my sheep.'
And the angels echoed around the throne,
'Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own.' "

—Selected

—M—

Your Letters

FROM IDAHO

Dear Missionary Readers:

At Sabbath School sister Luella is my teacher. I am in the Junior class. The others in my class are writing too.

My oldest sister, Mary, graduated from the eighth grade on May 18th.

I wish someone would write to me. I am nine and in the fourth grade. My address is Route 3 Caldwell, Idaho.

I am glad I have a mother and father and a home.

A Reader, Alice Cory

(Here is another one who would like a pen pal. Get busy, youngsters. You have much to be thankful for and God is pleased to have you say so, Alice.)

* * * *

FROM IDAHO

Dear Missionary Readers:

I have not written for some time. My Sabbath School teacher is Luella Labusohr.

I am twelve years old and in the Junior class.

I would like to have some girl around my age write to me.

Others in my class are writing so I will close for now. My address is Lola Palmer, Kuna, Idaho Route 2.

Your friend,

Lola Palmer

(Your letter may bring you a pen pal, Lola. It would be interesting to hear about it, so be sure to write again, soon.)

—M—

A REAL HERO

A little boy was tempted to pluck some cherries from a tree which his father had forbidden him to touch. "You need not be afraid," said his evil companions, "for if your father should find out that you had taken them, he is too kind to hurt you."

"Ah," said the little fellow, "that is the very reason why I would not touch them; for though my father would not hurt me, yet I should hurt him and myself by my disobedience."—Selected



FOR
SEPTEMBER 10, 1949

Lesson Material: Psalm 103:8-13.

Memory Verse: "Seek the Lord, and his strength; seek his face evermore."—Psalm 105:4.

A Song About Our Loving Father

God is good. He is our heavenly Father. We all love our fathers and they are good to us. We know our fathers love us, but our heavenly Father loves us with a greater love.

God loved us so very much that He sent His only Son to die for us.

David wrote many songs about God and His loving-kindness. He sang these songs as he played on his harp.

David sang about the goodness of God. God is slow to anger. He is patient with us, because He remembers that we are weak and He loves us so much He wants us to love and obey Him.

When we sin and ask His forgiveness, He is always willing to forgive and help us to walk in His ways.

God does not punish us according to our sins. If we received as much punishment as we deserve, we would not be able to bear it. God is merciful. When we ask forgiveness, He removes our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.

God took care of David when he was in danger. God will take care of us if we trust Him as David did. God wants His children to be kind to each other and obedient to Him, in all things.

Do You Remember?

1. The name of our heavenly Father?
2. What kind of Father He is?
3. How much God loves us?
4. Who wrote many songs about God?
5. How far God removes our sins from us?
6. Who took care of David?
7. If we trust in He will care for us.
8. What God wants His children to do?
9. Our memory verse?

BE COURTEOUS, BOYS

"I treat him as well as he treats me," said Hal. His mother had just reproached him because he did not attempt to amuse or entertain a boy friend who had gone home.

"I often go in there, and he doesn't notice me," said Hal again.

"Do you enjoy that?"

"Oh! I don't mind; I don't stay long."

"I should call myself a very selfish person if friends came to see me and I should pay no attention to them."

"Well, that different; you're grown up."

"Then, you really think that politeness and courtesy are not expected among boys?"

Hal, thus pressed, said that he didn't exactly mean that; but his father, who had listened, now spoke: "A boy or a man who measures his treatment of others by their treatment of him has no character of his own. He will never be kind or generous or Christian. If he is ever to be a gentleman, he will be so in spite of the boorishness of others. If he is to be noble, no other boy's meanness will change his nature."

And very earnestly the father added: "Remember this, my boy—you lower your own self every time you are guilty of an unworthy action because someone else is. Be true to your best self, and no boy can drag you down."—Wellspring

—M—

Know Your Bible . . .

You could live in something Paul made,
When he was not preaching, what was his trade?

While Jesus was praying in Gethsemane
Who fell asleep, can you name the three?

Who wrote some words upon the sand
Using the fingers of his hand?

Ans. Tentmaker; Peter, James and John; Jesus.

M. J. B.

SINGING INSTEAD OF CRYING

A little girl only eight years old cut her hand so badly that it was necessary for her to go to the doctor to have the wound stitched up. While the doctor was making preparation to sew up the cut, the little girl showed her nervousness by swinging her foot against the chair. Her mother told her not to do this, but the doctor said, "Never mind; that will do no harm, as long as you hold your hand still!" Then, looking at the anxious face of the little patient, he said, "You may cry as much as you like."

"But I would rather sing," replied the child.

"All right," answered the doctor. "What can you sing?"

"I can sing 'Give said the little stream,' " was the reply.

"How does it begin?" asked the doctor.

The little girl began singing the first verse. "That's beautiful," said the doctor. "I want to hear all of it."

And so all the time that the skilled fingers of the doctor were sewing up the wound, the sweet voice of the child sounded bravely through the room. Wasn't that a great deal better than crying?—Unknown

—M—

Learn to serve the Lord with your hands as well as with your heart.